

Washington County Economic Events

Updated 9/15/03

SkyWest Airlines announced Wednesday that it has finalized an 11-year agreement with United Air Lines to expand its offerings of connecting flights as United Express. The agreement, which has been in the works since United filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in December 2002, requires that SkyWest more than double its regional jet fleet over the next five years. By then, SkyWest will operate a fleet of 140 aircraft. The deal, approved this week by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, will provide SkyWest with expanded opportunities out of United's Chicago and Denver hubs. *Salt Lake Tribune 9/11/03*

A \$55 million, 160,000-square-foot Blue Bunny ice cream facility located in St. George began producing saleable ice cream on July 29. Of the 49 people employed at the plant, 12 transferred from the company's Iowa facility. Employees in the production process receive a wage ranging from \$10 to \$13 an hour with full benefits. The company's annual payroll of \$2.28 million and its estimated 203 associated jobs bring a cumulative economic impact of \$26 million to the local economy. *Deseret News, 9/10/03*

St. George-based SkyWest Airlines Inc. reported a 46.7 percent increase in revenue passenger miles (RPMs) for August, while available seat miles (ASMs) increased 38.1 percent compared with the same period last year. The airline generated 396.1 million RPMs for the month, while ASMs increased to 527.8 million. Load factor was 75.1 percent compared with 70.7 percent for the same period last year. Passenger boardings for August totaled 1,001,968, a 30.6 percent increase over August 2002. SkyWest operates as Continental Connection, Delta Connection and United Express carriers under marketing agreements with Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines and United Airlines respectively. *Salt Lake Tribune 9/10/03*

The natural gas-fired electrical utility that serves the residents of tiny Hildale and its sister community of Colorado City just across the Arizona state line is in financial trouble. Twin City Power, which serves approximately 1,000 homes in the two communities nestled among the redrock cliff country along Utah's southern border, missed its payment due Sept. 1 on \$20 million in revenue bonds. The utility is negotiating with its advisers and largest bond holders about adjusting its obligations and reorganizing the debt. *Salt Lake Tribune, 9/6/03*

During July, the St. George hotel/motel occupancy rate measured 70.4 percent compared to 66 percent statewide. *Salt Lake Tribune, 8/27/03*

SunRiver St. George, an active-adult retirement community, recently was listed by Where to Retire magazine among the top 100 best master-planned communities. It was the second time SunRiver made the list and was the only community in Utah on this year's list. Nearly 500 planned communities throughout the country were evaluated by the magazine, which publishes five times per year. *Deseret News*, 8/24/03

Intermountain Health Care will open of an IHC InstaCare facility in Hurricane in October along with the purchase of 20 acres for a future hospital. Before a new hospital can be built, IHC needs to build a fountain -- adding local practitioners to its roster in order to support the hospital. Kane said nine to 10 providers will be needed in the area and already has its first partner in Greg Last, M.D., and Penny Emett, C.F.N.P. Last will now operate under the name of IHC Health Center -- Hurricane in his current location, 90 S. 700 West. The InstaCare will also be in the same location. *The Spectrum*, 8/22/03

As the city still waits for the U.S. Congress to pass an amended bill to protect hundreds of Virgin River dinosaur tracks, the City Council is expected to award a bid for the design and construction of a dinosaur tracks museum. The council will hear presentations on costs, building design and construction timelines from three finalists: Okland Construction/Naylor Wentworth Lund Architects, Bird/AJC Architects and Mahas Construction/EDA Architects. A selection committee will recommend one from the three, and the council will either confirm or reject the selection. The teams, which have been chosen out of 15 applicants, are asked to limit the project's total spending to \$1.2 million, Perkins said. Construction will soon begin, hopefully to be completed as early as July of next year. The state has committed \$400,000, the city \$150,000, while Washington County has been urged to give \$150,000. Even so, the project still hinges on whether Congress passes an amended bill that would allow St. George to receive up to \$500,000, promised in the Virgin River Dinosaur Footprint Preserve Act. *The Spectrum*, 8/20/03

Bucking turbulent conditions industrywide, St. George-based SkyWest Airlines continues to fly high, reporting net income of nearly \$15 million, or 26 cents a share, for the quarter ended June 30. That compares with income of \$22 million, or 38 cents, for a the same quarter a year ago. SkyWest said those results reflect previously announced adjustments to revenue and expenses related to the company's maintenance policy. The company's second-quarter revenue increased 12 percent to \$212.7 million. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7/31/03

The new Interstate 15 interchange at Washington, (Exit 10), which has been under construction since April 2002, is now open. The design of the \$9.8 million project will handle the flow of traffic more efficiently. Right-turning traffic will not have to stop getting on or off the freeway, and through traffic and left-turning vehicles will be controlled by a single traffic signal where before there were two. Surface streets also have been widened and improved. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7/29/03

The Washington City Council is wagering about \$17,000 on the future of fiber optics, hoping the small investment will yield lucrative returns. The Council voted to enter into a change order agreement with the Washington Water Conservancy District and St. George, who are already in the process of constructing a fiber optic conduit line through the trenches of the water pipeline from Ivins to Quail Lake. Washington City will pay about 7 percent of the more than \$200,000 needed for the conduit, entitling the city to a portion of any returns. There is no way of foretelling the future of fiber optics in the telecommunications industry in general, or the county specifically -- whether the conduit will facilitate business, or vice versa. But if demand is high, the fiber optic conduit could prove a profitable venture. *The Spectrum*, 7/24/03

SkyWest Airlines Inc., flexing its increasing strength in the regional commuter airline market, reported Tuesday that its passenger traffic for June was up more than a third from the same time a year ago. The St. George-based carrier registered a 39.3 percent increase last month in revenue passenger miles, a measure of available plane seats actually sold. Available seat miles -- a formula determining an airline's seating capacity - increased 35.1 percent compared to June 2002. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7/9/03

The federal government has designated the entire state of Utah a natural disaster area as a result of prolonged drought conditions, insect infestations and high winds. The designation makes farmers in all 29 counties eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency. Utah is in its fifth year of drought, and the USDA's Palmer drought index ranked the state the nation's driest. What's being offered is low-interest loans and possible future assistance when it is made available by federal and state agencies. *Deseret News*, 7/2/03

About 30 Stephen Wade Power Sports employees staged a walkout Tuesday evening, leaving less than five employees to run the business. The walkout will not change plans to do business today, however. Owner Stephen Wade said the establishment—which sells and services all-terrain vehicles and related products—will be open. The employees that come to work today will still have jobs. Employees from the owner's other businesses will cover the other positions. Employees said they were dissatisfied with how often the general management is being changed. The general manager recently was replaced. The employees also want to be able to purchase the business from Stephen Wade. *The Spectrum*, 7/2/03

Five Utah parks have received \$874,000 in matching grants from the National Park Service to build new picnic areas, playing fields, trails and other improvements. St. George's Slick Rock Park was awarded \$90,000 under the program. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6/28/03

The vacancy rate at St. George hotels/motels reached 60 percent in May according to the Rocky Mountain Lodging Report. *Salt Lake Tribune* 6/24/03

Coral Canyon Golf Course in St. George earned a rating above 20 from the Zagat survey, qualifying it as one of the publication's top golf courses in 2003. In addition, Golf for Women magazine included Coral Canyon on its "50 Best Courses for Women in the U.S." list, and Golf Digest named it the fourth best golf course in Utah. Coral Canyon is owned and managed by SunCor Golf of Tempe, Ariz. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6/24/03

A legislative mistake is holding up \$500,000 in matching federal funds that would preserve a trove of fossils and petrified dinosaur tracks. U.S. Rep. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, said he plans to introduce a technical correction to a bill that instructs the Interior Department to buy land on the farm of Sheldon Johnson and deed it over to St. George. That \$500,000 for the land is secure, but the Interior Department says a problem in the Virgin River Dinosaur Footprint Preserve Act signed by President Bush last December prevents the department from releasing another \$500,000 to help preserve the fossilized findings. The Utah Legislature budgeted \$400,000 to help build a museum. St. George Mayor Dan McArthur said the city will add \$150,000. The city is reviewing building designs for a \$700,000 museum that could open within a year, McArthur said. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6/15/03

Local communities will soon benefit from a grant distributed by the Utah Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Services and Homeland Security. Region IV, which includes Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane and Washington counties, received \$375,005 from the state homeland security grant, part of nearly \$3.9 million awarded across the state. The 2003 grant came from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Domestic Preparedness, according to a news release from the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Services and Homeland Security. Region IV decided to use the money awarded to them to improve communications devices and purchase communication devices to allow cities to speak with other cities -- like St. George to Beaver. *The Spectrum*, 6/13/03

Washington County Board of Education members approved next year's \$145 million budget. The district is projecting 3-percent growth in enrollment—about 600 students, or the equivalent of a new school. The district plans to sell around \$25 million in bonds this year to fund several projects, including a new elementary school in the Washington Fields area to the north of St. George. Money to repay any bonds sold by the district will come from the county's projected growth in assessed valuation of property, which also is expected to rise next year by 2.3 percent. Any increase in revenue is welcome, especially since the school board earlier voted to increase student fees, raise the student to teacher ratio and cut two paid days from district employee contracts to balance the 2002-2003 budget. *Deseret News*, 6/12/03

SkyWest Inc. signed a deal with United Airlines that could more than double the size of its commuter fleet and boost its nationwide work force by 50 percent. The 11-year pact with the nation's second-largest commercial air carrier would increase the St. George-based airline's fleet from the current 110 planes -- including 55 turboprops and a like number of 50-seat regional jets -- to 227 total aircraft. While the exact deadline for completion of the SkyWest expansion is not known, United has committed to providing the commuter airline with 30 new 70-seat jets by mid-2005, said Brad Rich, SkyWest's chief financial officer. *Salt Lake Tribune, 6/11/03*

The Washington County School Board awarded the bid to a Salt Lake City-based company for construction of the Washington Fields Elementary School, which is scheduled to open for the 2004-05 school year. Bud Mahas Construction bid \$4,935,000 for the building contract, said Phil Williams, capital facilities director for the Washington County School District. The opening of Washington Fields Elementary is expected to alleviate growth pressure in the Washington Fields area, where student enrollment has grown at 9.5 percent annually in recent years. *The Spectrum, 6/11/03*

The "Affordable Housing in Utah Cities" study from the University of Utah's Bureau of Economic and Business Research ranks 52 cities based on the percentage of affordable units built between 1997 and 2002. The report defines an affordable dwelling as one with a monthly rental or mortgage payment that a family earning 80 percent or less of their county's median income would be able to afford without spending more than one-third of their pay on housing. Ivins was listed as one of the most unaffordable communities in Utah. *Salt Lake Tribune, 6/7/03*

The Spectrum has purchased a production facility in the Fort Pierce Industrial Park. The 28,800-square-foot facility will house an 11-unit Goss Urbanite Press with twice the speed, capacity and color capability of the current printing press, said Scott Porter, the newspaper's production director. Operations are to begin in November. Since 1985, the newspaper has been produced on a more than 40-year-old Goss Community Press located in the St. George Boulevard office. The Spectrum contracted other publications the press could not accommodate to printing facilities in Salt Lake City and Las Vegas. *Salt Lake Tribune, 6/7/03*

Seven years of planning and coordination has finally paid off with the construction process now begun on the new bridge across the Santa Clara River next to Southgate Golf Course. At this time, the foundation of the bridge has been completed and the bridge deck girders will be placed in June. The contractor on the project is Interstate Rock Products from Hurricane, headed up by Don Stratton. Construction began in January and is on schedule to be completed at the end of the summer. What this \$3.5 million project will do is connect Hilton Drive where it intersects Indian Hills Drive and tie Hilton into Dixie Drive near the Tonaquint Park entrance as one main 40 mph roadway. *The Spectrum, 5/24/03*

The Utah Department of Transportation, in conjunction with St. George City, has studied the intersection of Bluff Street and St. George Boulevard to provide a more efficient way to move traffic through the congested junction. There were three primary alternatives being considered. The first would include a moderate widening of Bluff Street to provide two southbound lanes turning left onto the Boulevard and two southbound lanes moving through the intersection. The second would include restriping the existing pavement to accommodate two southbound left turns onto the Boulevard, with one of those lanes sharing with vehicles going straight through the intersection, along with one exclusive through lane. The third alternative would include the widening Bluff Street substantially that would allow two southbound left turn lanes, two southbound through lanes, a southbound right turn lane, and 3 northbound through lanes. *The Spectrum, 5/24/03*

In cooperation with UDOT, the Exit 10 reconstruction project in Washington is scheduled to be completed in October. The contractor anticipates completion prior to this date. In cooperation with UDOT, there are two new signals -- one of which is being constructed at the intersection of 700 West and Telegraph streets and the other being constructed at the intersection of SR-9 and Telegraph street. *The Spectrum, 5/24/03*

Public works projects in Virgin include a new two-lane concrete bridge connecting Highway 9 to Highway 59. The bridge replaces an old, two-lane steel one. Mesa Road has recently been covered in 2,000 feet of new black top surface. Safety concrete barriers were purchased recently and approximately half have been placed on the most dangerous turns. *The Spectrum, 5/22/04*

The bridge spanning the Virgin River between Hurricane and LaVerkin is a major project at this time. The historic arch bridge was becoming inadequate for vehicular traffic and was dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Utah Department of Transportation and Hurricane and LaVerkin have been planning for many years to help solve these problems. The project is now well under way. The new bridge will be 50-feet 3-inches wide with two travel lanes, two shoulders and a pedestrian lane. Construction costs on the new bridge and the refurbishing of the existing bridge will be \$11.2 million with an original completion date of December 2004. The project is expected to be done before its completion date—possibly by six to nine months. *The Spectrum, 5/22/03*

April's highest Utah hotel occupancy rates were recorded in the St. George area (74 percent), according to Rocky Mountain Lodging Report figures. Statewide occupancy rates measured 58 percent. *Salt Lake Tribune, 5/22/03*

Despite continuing uncertainty in the air industry, SkyWest Airlines strengthened its position as a regional airline Monday, announcing it will partner with Continental Airlines. SkyWest 30-passenger Brasilia turbo-prop aircraft will fly as the Continental Connection out of Continental's Houston hub, Sky West chief operating officer Ron Reber said. Continental Connection will link Houston to Killeen, Texas, beginning July 1 and to Waco on Aug. 1, Continental announced. Additional routes with the nation's seventh-largest airline will be announced later. *Salt Lake Tribune, 5/20/03*

According to the University of Utah's Bureau of Economic and Business Research, during the first three months of 2003, St. George led Utah cities in approving new dwelling permits with 247 permits issued. *Deseret News*, 5/10/03

SkyWest Airlines Inc. of St. George reported a 33.1 percent increase in revenue passenger miles (RPMs) for April, while available seat miles increased 30.7 percent compared with the same period last year. The airline generated 299.9 million RPMs for the month, while ASMs increased to 445.7 million. Load factor increased 1.3 points to 67.3 percent, compared to 66.0 percent for the same period last year. Passenger boardings for April totaled 775,130 an 18.0 percent increase over April 2002. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5/13/03

A computer lab at Tuacahn High School has been designated as a "smart site" for its updated technology and community accessibility. The smart site will be open to Washington County residents for self-guided training in such areas as computer basics, data management and desktop publishing. LearnKey, a St. George-based e-learning technology company, will conduct some training at the site. The company is donating its time, software and other materials as a service to the community and a selling point to its clients. *The Spectrum*, 5/8/03

A proposal has been made to build a new highway called the Southern Corridor which would connect St. George to Hurricane via a multi-lane, divided highway on the eastern side of the county. *Deseret News*, 5/5/03

Dixie College has announced that the college has allocated enough funding to hire new nursing faculty and establish a bachelor's degree in nursing. The program, which will be the fourth four-year program at Dixie State, will be funded by \$75,000 from the state, \$100,000 donated by Dixie Regional Medical Center and \$40,000 from community donations, plus money saved from recent programs that the college has eliminated. The college will also spend \$150,000 to hire nursing faculty. *The Spectrum*, 5/3/03

A private company has indicated it intends to bring fiber-optic redundancy to the St. George area. The city approved a memorandum of understanding with a company called Interlinx which plans to build a fully redundant fiber-optic network in St. George and surrounding areas. The company plans a center office and data center, which will essentially become the hub for St. George. This proposal would be a major advance in telecommunications capacity for the county. *The Spectrum*, 5/2/03

The U.S. Census reported that Washington County population grew 5.1 percent from July 2001 to July 2002 making it the fastest growing county in Utah. *The Spectrum*, 4/24/03

The Village Bank broke ground at 1224 S. River Road on March 28 for what will become its third office location serving eastern Washington County residents. The 4,000-square-foot building was designed by Dennis Patten Architects and will be constructed by Pride Construction Company. Construction should be complete by August. The Village Bank on River Road will include four wide drive-through tellers, an ATM and a full-service financial office with on-site loan officers. It will also be equipped to handle all types of personal and commercial accounts. *The Spectrum*, 4/22/03

Washington County is among the 100 fastest-growing counties in the nation and was the fastest growing in the state between July 1, 2001, and July 1, 2002, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates. Washington County ranked 26th among the 100 fastest-growing counties (with 10,000 or more residents) between April 1, 2000, when the decennial census was taken, and July 1, 2002. Washington County's population, which nearly doubled during the 1990s, grew by 5.1 percent in 2001-02. *Deseret News*, 4/17/03

The Sand Hollow Reservoir has been formally dedicated. The reservoir serves several purposes. It will help regenerate the Navajo sandstone on which the reservoir is built and provide a water storage area with a 20,000-acre-foot drought reserve pool. But it also will be a recreation area. Part of the state parks system, Sand Hollow State Park will be constructed in three phases. The first phase will include an entrance station, pavement, boat ramp, marina area and off-highway vehicle staging area, as well as temporary day-use and camping facilities. Phase two includes development of two campgrounds and four day-use facilities. The main campground will offer 50 full utility campsites with shelters, picnic tables, fire rings and restrooms with showers. Another campground will be located on the south shore. Phase three will offer a group-use acre and an equestrian area that will offer trail access and camping. Phase three also includes development of a concession area. *The Spectrum*, 4/15/03

The Southwest Center, a five-county government agency that provides services ranging from substance abuse counseling to marriage counseling has officially opened its new building. The \$3.5 million, 36,000 square-foot-building combines the functions of five offices that used to be scattered around St. George. *The Spectrum*, 4/11/03

The LaVerkin City Council has approved a conditional use permit for a new LDS chapel. Construction of the chapel will begin later this year and construction is expected to be completed by July or August of next year. *The Spectrum*, 4/3/03

The Zion Canyon Transportation System's free shuttle has resumed with its fourth season of operation. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3/30/03

The Leeds Planning Commission has recommended approval of a 10-lot subdivision with the condition that the developer get a variance for a cul-de-sac. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3/21/03

St. George average price for regular, unleaded gasoline increased 17 cents to \$1.76 per gallon during the 30-day period of February 9 to March 11—the largest spike of any place in the state. During the same period, Utah's overall gas price rose 13 cents to \$1.69, a 56-cent increase from last year according to AAA's monthly Fuel Gauge Report. *The Spectrum*, 3/17/03

The Division of Youth Corrections has broken ground for a new juvenile detention center. The new center will solve the over capacity problem of the Washington County Youth Crisis Center. The new center will be constructed adjacent to the existing Purgatory Correctional Facility and will contain 64 beds—with plans to expand to 90 beds. *The Spectrum*, 3/6/03

Coral Desert Rehabilitation has broken ground on a new \$5 million rehabilitation facility to be built south of the new Dixie Regional Center on River Road. The facility is scheduled to open in December and will treat patients of all ages for ailments from car accident injuries to athletic injuries to senior rehabilitation patients. It will include cardiac and neurological rehabilitation, as well as physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy. *The Spectrum*, 3/4/03

The Legislature's \$7.3 billion budget includes \$400,000 to preserve more than 400 fossilized dinosaur tracks near the Virgin River in St. George. Officials said the money would help fund a museum to protect the fragile sandstone footprints. *The Spectrum*, 3/4/03

The Leeds Special Service District recently received a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Community Facilities loan for \$100,000 and a grant for \$50,000 for a new fire truck and related equipment. *The Spectrum*, 2/27/03

According to the Rocky Mountain Lodging Report, St. George was one of only two cities in Utah reporting a hotel/motel occupancy rate of greater than 50 percent (53.2 percent) in January. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 2/25/03

Green Desing Build, LLC, a residential and commercial design and build firm, has opened an office in St. George. *The Spectrum*, 2/23/03

Ground has been broken for the Sunset shopping center on Sunset Boulevard. Major tenants will include Alberstons, Hollywood Video, Great Clips, Subway and Baskin Robbins. The shopping mall will also include a pizza parlor and Chinese restaurant. *The Spectrum*, 2/18/03

In a recently passed bill, Congress approved \$250,000 for water system improvements in St. George. *Deseret News*, 2/14/03

Dixie Regional Medical Center has added a new cancer treatment facility. Formerly, most St. George patients went to Salt Lake City for this type of treatment. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 2/14/03

The 13th St. George Area Parade of Homes brought many out-of-town visitors to the St. George area in February. The economic impact of the Parade to the community is estimated at \$32 million. *The Spectrum*, 2/14/03

Ivins will begin advertising for bid on a \$50,000 project to repair the rough road along 400 East. *The Spectrum*, 2/7/03

Sunbrook Communities, a master-planned community in St. George hosted a public grand-opening at its Discovery Center. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 2/6/03

Dixie State College has registered record growth in spring enrollment. The number of full-time equivalent students registered for spring semester is up 10 percent from a year ago. *The Spectrum*, 1/27/03

The Paradise Bowl drew many outsiders to the St. George Area. Promoters estimate that 3,000 out of the 4,500 fans came from outside the area. *The Spectrum*, 1/26/03

Zion National Park saw an increase in visitors each month except January and August last year. For the year, visitors showed up more than 2.6 million time—higher than year in decade. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1/22/03

Assail Inc. in St. George has shut its doors due to an investigation by the U.S. Secret Service. The company is currently been assigned court-appointed receivers. Several hundred employees have lost their jobs. *The Spectrum*, 1/17/03

The Washington County School Board has approved a construction timeline for the Washington Fields Elementary School. The \$4.9 million project is scheduled to be open for bid in April and be completed in the 2004-2005 school year. *The Spectrum*, 1/15/03

The Utah State Parks and Recreation Board has approved the first phase of a recreational development at Sand Hollow Reservoir (which is currently filling), northeast of St. George. Initial development will include a park entrance, boat ramp and campground. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1/15/03

Zion National Park saw an increase in visitors every month in 2002 with the exception of January and August. The number of tourists climbed to roughly 2,614,700—the highest levels in 10 years.

The St. George City Council has approved a taxing structure that it hopes will aid in energizing the downtown. The developers of the Mainstreet Plaza will not pay property taxes for the first three years of the life of the building and its accompanying parking structure. The council also approved spending \$1.2 million for the city's portion of the Mainstreet Plaza parking structure. *The Spectrum*, 1/10/03

Several companies announced expansion at the Washington County Economic Summit. Deseret Laboratories is projecting an 18 percent increase in sales for fiscal 2003 and plans to create approximately 20 new Washington County jobs. Pace American also announce plans to add another 20 to 30 employees this year. *The Spectrum*, 1/9/03

Ground has been broken at the new Tonaquint industrial park for the future headquarters of Steton Technologies Group. The company expects to employ more than 30 workers once the facility is completed in May. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 01/09/02

The WalMart portion of the Red Cliffs Mall has been purchased by the owner of the mall General Growth Properties. The company is considering several retail opportunities for the space. *The Spectrum*, 01/04/03

The Hurricane City Council has voted to raise water rates and impact fees. It also voted to start assessing impact fees for new hangers at the Hurricane airport.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District has put in an order for \$5.4 million worth of pipe and fittings to provide customers with drinking water from the Quail Point Water Treatment Plant. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12/24/02

Hurricane is moving forward on a fire station for the city's growing west side. Architectural proposals have been received for a 4,500 to 5,200 square-foot building at 450 N 3400 W. Cost is estimated at \$430,000, a portion of which will be paid by a Community Development block grant. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12/19/02

Developers will begin work on the Main Street Plaza in St. George in January. The 90,000-square-foot complex will have about 70,000 square feet of space available for lease. A Blue Bunny Ice Cream parlor and several other companies have already signed leases. *The Spectrum* 12/19/02

Hurricane is planning to build a new fire station that will include apparatus bays, office areas, a bunk area and a kitchen/dining area. The station is expected to cost \$430,000. *The Spectrum*, 12/10/02

St. George-based SkyWest expects to escape most of the turbulence of United Airlines' bankruptcy filing. SkyWest receives a fixed fee for every United Express flight regardless of how many passengers it carries. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12/10/02

Dixie College has broken ground for its new \$19-million fine arts building. The 70,000 square-foot building will be the largest on campus. Completion of construction is expected for January 2004. *Deseret News*, 12/01/02

The OMG Apex chemical plant will close January 6, 2003 leaving 63 employees jobless. The company is shutting down the cobalt and tungsten production lines to cut corporate costs. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11/30/02

Entrada at Snow Canyon was listed among Zagat Survey/ESPN list of best golf courses

in the six-state Rocky Mountain region (Utah, Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming), and cited for its scenic qualities and being “Junior Friendly.” Coral Canyon made the “Women Friendly” list. *Deseret News*, 11/29/02

St. George hotels and motels had a 74.8 percent occupancy rate during October 2002 according to the Rocky Mountain Lodging Report. State occupancy rates measured only 58.7 percent. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11/26/02

The federal government soon will release \$500,000 to St. George so the city can preserve an extraordinary source of dinosaur tracks. *The Spectrum*, 11/21/02

Majestic View Lodge was approved by the Springdale Town Council to build three buildings with 20 rooms in each. The council also gave approval for the company to put in a building with 13 hotels rooms across the street at the former Eagles Nest. Zion Canyon Campground was approved to build three units of 18 rooms each. Only two will be constructed this year, with the third building to built in another year. *The Spectrum*, 11/18/02

Dixie State College announced the general contractor for the \$18 million Eccles/Graff Fine and Performing Arts Center which has recently received \$14.5 million from the Legislature. Layton Construction is expected to finish the 78,000 square-foot center by January 2004. *The Spectrum*, 11/07/02

St. George may soon be home to a campus of the University of Phoenix—a private, for-profit higher education institution that provides Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees to working adult students. *The Spectrum*, 11/05/02

A 100,000-square-foot plastic injection facility will be the next addition to the Fort Pierce Industrial Park in St. George. Bomatic Inc., plans on beginning construction of the plant in December or January. The new facility could create about 100 new jobs. *The Spectrum*, 10/31/02

The Washington County School Board has leased the Phelps Elementary School in Hildale to a group of investors who plan to open a private school on the site. The school was closed when members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ pulled their children out of the school. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10/27/02

The National Park Service has approved a project for PacifiCorp to upgrade power lines in and around Zion National Park. The lines have been a source on controversy since new poles will be 20 feet higher than the old ones. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10/27/02

The Washington County Commission voted Tuesday to approve a zone change that will allow for the creation of the Copper Rock Golf Course and Development in the Hurricane area. It will be a 1,600-unit development on 900 acres of ground located adjacent to the existing Grassy Meadows Sky Ranch Subdivision in Hurricane. *The Spectrum*, 10/16/02

Rural Utah counties preparing budgets for next year may face cutbacks in federal PILT funds. Since 1977, the federal government has provided "payment in lieu of taxes" funds to counties with large tracts of nontaxable federal land. The federal budget for 2003 has yet to be approved, and President Bush wants to cut PILT money by 23.5 percent. Utah is fifth in the nation in PILT funding, behind California. In 2002, Utah received more than \$16 million. Last year Washington County received \$1.3 million. *Deseret News*, 10/15/02

After a two-day evaluation, Dixie State College is one step closer to gaining accreditation at the baccalaureate level. A team representing the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges conducted an intensive review of the college. The complete report and a recommendation on accreditation will be turned over to the college and Commission on Colleges and Universities for review in December. In early January 2003, the college will be notified of the commission's action. *Deseret News*, 10/12/02

The number on single-family housing units sold in Washington County during third quarter 2002 was up more than 200 percent over the same figure a year ago. The average home price rose from \$143,091 in third quarter 2001 to \$145,668 in third quarter 2002. *Deseret News*, 10/11/02

The St. George City Council has decided to participate in a massive power project that involves communities in Utah and Arizona. The plant will be built in Payson. St. George will contribute \$10 million to the project over the next 20 years. The cost of power to come from the future plant is estimated to be \$5 per megawatt hour. The average price of power to the city of St. George in midsummer 2001 was more than \$37 per megawatt hour. *The Spectrum*, 9/27/02

The Virgin Town Council gave approval to Liahona Academy, residential youth facility to build a home in the town that will house up to 48 boys. *The Spectrum*, 9/20/02

Utah ranchers, hit hard by drought, will soon receive millions of dollars in immediate federal aid. The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced it would release \$752 million in cash to relieve drought-stricken livestock in 37 states. Utah is one of seven states that has declared a statewide drought disaster, and therefore, will qualify for a large share of the money. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 09/20/02

In response to a recent court ruling, the Federal Aviation Administration issued an order that St. George must conduct a comprehensive environmental study concerning the new airport's possible effect on the natural quiet of Zion National Park. The project, originally scheduled for completion in 2008, will probably be delayed one to two years. *Salt Lake Tribune, 9/11/02*

The St. George City Council decided to match \$130,000 in federal funds to keep Dixie Area Rapid Transit System (DARTS) service running. However, starting in January, the city will cut back service. *Deseret News, 9/08/02*

St. George-based SkyWest Airlines is one of only a few air carriers to generate a steady profit since terrorists crashed jetliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Over the past 12 months, the airline has increased its fleet by 31 planes, expanded its route system to 10 additional cities and hire more than 700 new employees. *Salt Lake Tribune, 9/08/02*

A \$500,000 dental clinic will soon begin serving Dixie State College's dental hygiene program and offer the community checkup and cleaning for minimal fees. *Salt Lake Tribune, 8/24/02*

Privately held Deseret Laboratories International and California-based AutoImmune Inc., have formed Colloral LLC, a joint venture that will manufacture, market and sell Colloral, a product for nutritional support of patients with rheumatoid arthritis. *Deseret News, 8/20/02*

The Learning Center for Families has received a \$515,835 grant from the Administration for Children and Families to provide Early Head Start services to low income pregnant women and families of children birth to three.

Work has been completed on the new \$3.1 million, 33,800-square-foot Washington County School District headquarters in St. George. *The Spectrum, 8/14/02*
Las Vegas-based slot machine manufacturer, Mikohn Gaming Corp plans to layoff about 100 employees across the country and move its remaining Las Vegas manufacturing operations to Hurricane. *The Spectrum, 8/9/02*

Workers are installing the second roundabout intersection in St. George, this one at Tabernacle and Main. At \$230,000 the roundabout will cost three times that of a traffic light installation. *Salt Lake Tribune, 8/5/02*

Work has begun on a new bridge which will span the 400-foot-wide Virgin River gorge 10 miles southwest of Zion National Park on State Route 9. The old bridge will be retrofitted and widened when the new bridge is completed. In 2004, the upgraded bridge will handle southbound traffic while the new one will take northbound vehicles. Together, the dual bridge project will cost \$11.2 million. *Salt Lake Tribune, 8/4/02*